



Federal Communications Commission  
Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau  
Washington, D.C. 20554

MAY 19 2005

Control No. 0501001-DRO

The Honorable Allyson Y. Schwartz  
U. S. House of Representatives  
423 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

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JUN 08 2005

Federal Communications Commission  
Office of the Secretary

Dear Congresswoman Schwartz:

Thank you for your letter of April 28, 2005, to the Federal Communications Commission (Commission or FCC), on behalf of your constituent, Mr. Travis Oshman, expressing his concerns regarding Video Relay Service (VRS), a form of telecommunications relay service (TRS). Your correspondence was forwarded to the Commission's Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau for handling.

In his letter, Mr. Oshman supports requiring interoperability for VRS. Mr. Oshman also expresses concerns with inordinate delays in reaching a VRS communications assistant, particularly in the context of a potential emergency situation. Mr. Oshman raises a further concern over deaf individuals relying on VRS rather than a TTY (text-based TRS device) in emergency situations.

Mr. Oshman's concerns relate to two issues currently being considered by the FCC: interoperability of equipment used to access VRS and the "speed of answer" for VRS. On February 15, 2005, the California Coalition of Agencies Serving the Deaf and Hard of Hearing filed a Petition for Declaratory Ruling on Interoperability, asking the FCC prohibit any VRS provider that receives compensation from the Interstate Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS) Fund from purposely restricting its deaf and hard-of-hearing customers to a single VRS provider via the software or hardware of their VRS equipment or through exclusivity agreements with those customers. On March 1, 2005, the FCC released a Public Notice (DA 05-509) seeking public comment on this issue. Comments were due April 15, 2005, and reply comments were due May 2, 2005. The issue of interoperability will be addressed in a future order.

The Commission understands and shares Mr. Oshman's concern over the amount of time sometimes needed to reach a VRS communications assistant. There is currently no speed of answer requirement mandating how quickly a VRS provider must answer an incoming VRS call. The Commission waived the application of its traditional speed of answer rule for VRS, to allow providers to gain experience in their ability to handle VRS traffic. However, this issue is raised in a Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (FNPRM) the Commission released on June 30, 2004 (FCC 04-137). The Commission sought further comment on the speed of a

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answer issue in a Public Notice released on February 8, 2005 (DA 05-339), and the speed of answer issue for VRS will also be addressed in a future order.

Regarding Mr. Oshman's other concern of using VRS rather than a TTY in an emergency situation, the Commission has cautioned consumers about abandoning their TTYs and relying solely on Internet-based relay services, such as VRS, in emergency situations. Title II of the ADA requires 911 centers to be accessible to TTY calls, and a TTY call made to 911 directly passes along the caller's phone number as well as the geographic location information of the call. Due to the current Internet environment, such information is currently not passed to the 911 center via VRS. Per Commission directive, VRS providers are required to post disclaimers on their websites directing consumers to disconnect and call 911 directly via their TTY in an emergency situation.

The Commission has always been, and continues to be, supportive of the provision of VRS. We encourage Mr. Oshman to actively participate in proceedings before the Commission to ensure that his opinions are expressed and considered fully. The Commission has available an e-mail service designed to apprise consumers about developments at the Commission, to disseminate consumer information materials prepared by the Commission to a wide audience, and to invite comments from other parties on Commission regulatory proposals. This free service enables consumers to subscribe to and receive FCC fact sheets, consumer brochures and alerts, and public notices, among other consumer information. To subscribe, Mr. Oshman should visit the FCC Consumer Information Registry at <http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/contacts/>.

The Commission also invites Mr. Oshman to visit the Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau's Internet web site at <http://www.fcc.gov/cgb> or the Commission's Home Page located at <http://www.fcc.gov>.

A copy of Mr. Oshman's correspondence has been placed in the public record for these proceedings noted above. The Commission appreciates your inquiry. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have further questions.

Sincerely,



Jay Keithley  
Deputy Bureau Chief  
Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau

ALLYSON Y. SCHWARTZ  
13TH DISTRICT, PENNSYLVANIA

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INFRASTRUCTURE  
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**Congress of the United States**  
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10 MAY 2008 RCVD

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www.house.gov/schwartz

INTAKE PERSON: Anna Marie Feeney DATE: 4-28-05  
Name of Constituent: Travis Ashman  
Address: 1700 Mendenhall Drive Apartment: C-101  
City: North Wales State: PA Zip: 19454  
Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Business Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Social Security Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Any Other Claim Numbers: \_\_\_\_\_

Facts of the Cases: See Letter Enclosed

Pursuant to the provisions the Privacy Act of 1974 (Title 5, Section 552A of the United States Code) I hereby authorize the release of information from, or copies of, medical records or files regarding all information pertaining to me, to the Office of Congresswoman Allyson Y. Schwartz.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Travis Oshman  
1700 Winding Drive  
North Wales, PA 19454

3627

Dear FCC,

I support the petition to require VRS interoperability because I am having a hard time with calling different people on videophone. The frustrations I get, it causes some stress for me. I do not like when I am waiting for something very long and that system can be changed due to its unfairness. I do not like when my VRS is blocked because I expect my calls to be smooth, little of waiting but so far what I have experienced, they were so long. Sometimes I want to make a quick videophone before I do errands or go to someplace, But I can't because I tried to call someone, with that period of waiting, I cancelled the call because I have better things to do than waiting for VRS.

Not all calls I made are not that very important, but some of them are, if I have some kind of emergency and I will not able to make the emergency call to someone. I have know some of people who do not have TTY in their household because they thought VP 100 will able to do exactly thing as TTY, which's making call to relay and get the service quickly. So if one of person I know happens to have some kind of emergency and want to call hospital, but they could not call VRS quickly, due to the waiting line. It is somehow extreme dangerous for people who have VP100 and no TTY in their household.

It is very important to make everyone equally accessible by setting up one system just like telephone because it is something that we should have. It is our right to have the system set up like phone. Also, because it is part of monopoly acts, it is not right things to do. While hearing people have many phone companies to choose, and the phone company won't force that person to choose that service. If it happens, the company will go to court, getting sued by that person who was forced by that company. So it applies same to Videophone, and we should able to pick our own VRS company, company that we think that it fits the best for our area.

Thank you for this opportunity to make my comment.

Sincerely,

Travis Oshman

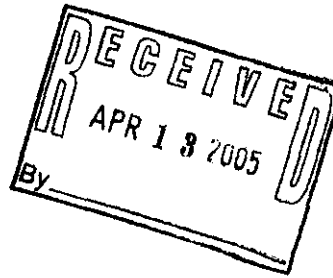


CC: Senator, Rick Santorum

Senator, Arlen Specter

House of Representative, Allyson Y. Schwartz

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Travis Oshman  
1700 Winding Drive  
North Wales, Pa 19454

Dear Honorable Allyson Y. Schwartz,

I am sending you this letter because I want you to be fully aware of our problems related to VRS. I have enclosed my letter to FCC, which will help you to understand our problem better. I hope you will give us full support toward this act. I appreciate for having you to take some time off to read this letter. I hope that you will take this seriously, getting this to be resolved.

Sincerely,  
Travis Oshman